

OM SRI PATANJALAYE NAMAH

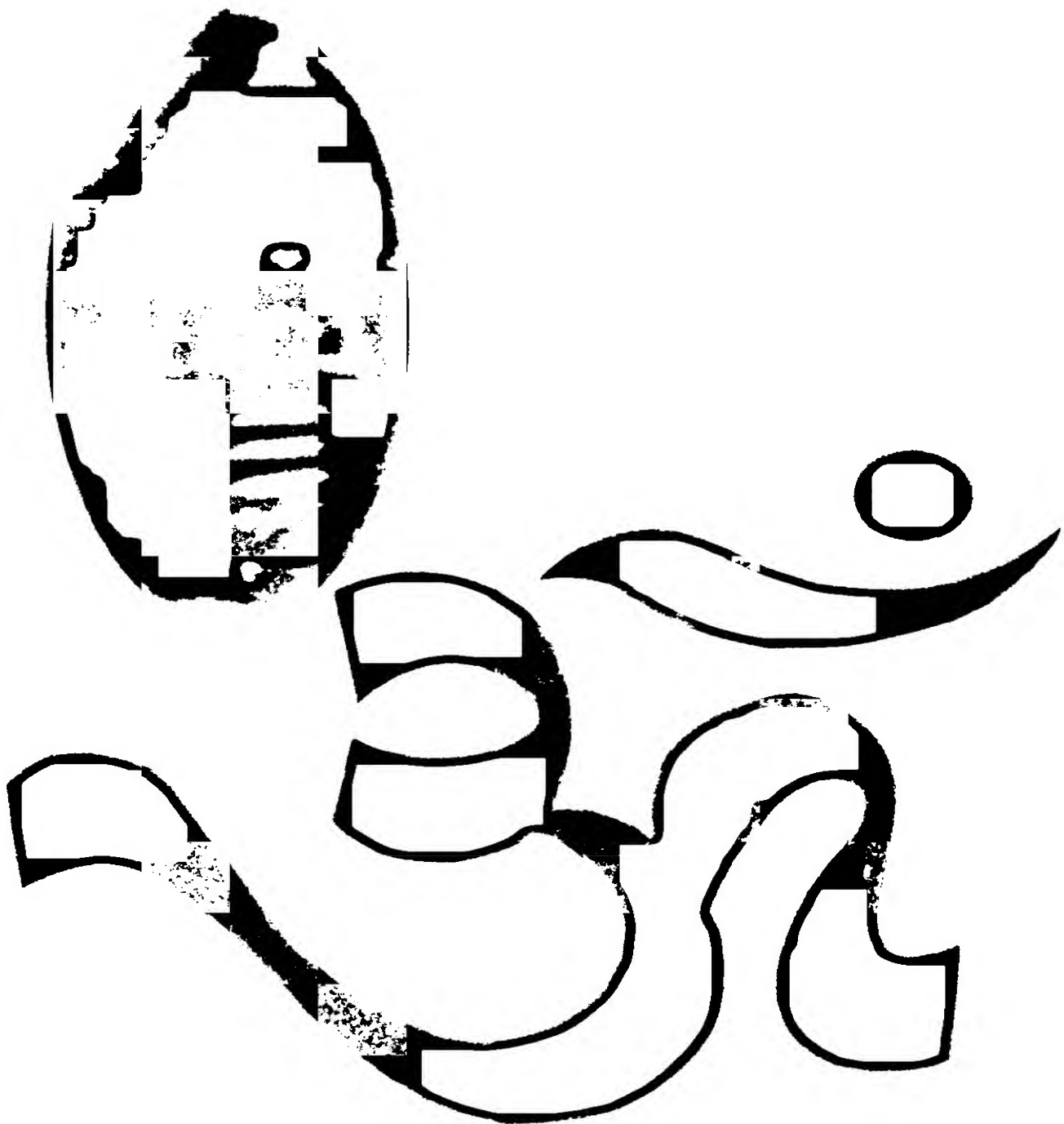
THE WISDOM OF YOGA



Satyam Publications, Rishikesh, Himalayas

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स्वामी शान्तिधर्मानन्द सरस्वतीजी

सत्यं साधना कुटीर

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om

॥ Om Śri Ganeśāya namah ॥

॥ Om Śri Gurubhyo namah ॥

॥ Om Śri Patañjalaye namah ॥

Omkāra bindu sañyuktam, Nityam Dhyāyanti Yoginah ।
Kāmadam Mokṣadam caiva, omkārāya namo namah ॥1॥



Yogena cittasya padena vācām, malam Śarirasya ca vaidyakena ।
Yo apākarottam pravaram muninām, Patañjalim prāñjalirā natosmi ॥2॥



Abahu puruṣākāram, śankha cakrāsi dhārinam ।
Sahasra śiraṣam śvetam, pranamāmi patañjalim ॥ 3 ॥



Gurur brahmā Gurur Viṣṇur, Gurur devo maheśvarah ।
Guruh sāksāt param brahma, Tasmai Śri gurave namah ॥ 4 ॥



Sarve bhavanatu sukhinah, sarve santu nirāmayāh ।
Sarve bhadraṇi pasyentu, ma kaścid dukha bhāg bhavet ॥ 5 ॥



Om S'āntih S'āntih S'āntih ॥

Patanjali Yoga and Scientific Value System

Religion versus Science

This is the age of science and technology. It is also the age of conflicts, clashes and terrorism. The human race has never had it so good with respect to material prosperity, but is not able to enjoy it contentedly because life has become so uncertain. Science has successfully fulfilled its promise of material welfare, but has failed to deliver peace of mind. Mankind is caught between the devil and the deep sea, between Science on the one hand and organized Religion on the other hand. Most of the scientists today believe that religion is a mass of superstition and religionists feel that science is a monster poised to destroy the world.

There are, however, a small percentage of scientists and religionists who hope that a way can be found out of this morass by a proper amalgamation of the two. But, prejudices die hard on both sides. The main objection raised by science against religion is that the latter is irrational and cannot stand the test of reason. But is this really true and correct?

The conflict between science and religion is essentially a western phenomenon. India has never faced this problem, because science has always been considered to be as much a quest for truth as religion or philosophy. Still, modern day scientists have been so well drowned in western ideas and concepts that it is difficult for them to appreciate that certain aspects of philosophy and spirituality can be as scientific as science itself.

The intention of this article is to address this question and to demonstrate that certain age-old spiritual practices are scientific and amenable to investigations following the methodology of conventional scientific investigations.

Science and its values

Science, as we know it today, is a product of the west, it had its origins in ancient Greece and spread throughout Europe in the post-Christian era. It had its ups and downs, depending upon the political upheavals in Europe. It was only in the sixteenth and the seventeenth

centuries that it came into its own. Thanks to Francis Bacon, Rene Descartes, Galileo and most importantly Isaac Newton .Since then it has dominated the world-thought and progress through its technological innovations, commencing with the Industrial revolution untill its modern form of the Computer revolution. Science, with its by-product technology, now permeates entire humanity in all walks of life.

The word science owes its origin to the Latin word *scientia*, meaning knowledge. In this sense, it stands for the entire content of human knowledge. However, knowledge itself is subdivided into two categories, viz, science and humanities including liberal arts. The latter impinge upon human life directly and have evolved a code of conduct or value system of their own. But there is a general impression in the public mind that, unlike its sister – the liberal arts, science has no value system. This impression is due to the fact that most often we tend to confuse between science and technology. If Science, as the practice of the quest for the truth, did not have its own value system, Then, it would not have become so powerful a branch of knowledge, and influenced practically every activity of the human race.

What is this value system which has made science a force to reckon with today? In his classic study of the sociology of science, Robert Merton has enunciated for basic values of science, viz, Universalism, Communalism, Disinterestedness and Organized skepticism. These values are respected by scientists, because, if they do not follow them, they or their work will be unacceptable to the scientific community. This value system is like an unwritten constitution, which has gained respectability because generations of scientists have followed it and made science non-partisan and global. We will now have a brief look at these values.

1. Universalism:-

This value demands that science should be independent of race, color, creed or gender and that it should be essentially international in character, with no artificial boundaries. This makes science essentially a unifying factor among diverse races and creeds. Two classic cases can be cited here, the first one is Hitler's attempt to dub the Theory of Relativity as Jewish science, since it had been enunciated by Einstein, a born Jew. Hitler's attempt to ban the teach-

ing of this theory ended in failure, because the scientific community was not prepared to accept prejudices.

The second example is that of William Shockley, a noble prize winner in physics, who tried to prove that black races are intellectually inferior to white races, this, again, was vehemently rejected by the scientific community.

2. Communalism :-

This value requires that scientific knowledge should be public knowledge, not the exclusive prerogative of any group. It also means free and frank exchange of scientific information among scientists across national boundaries. This is ensured by the system of publications in scientific journals, under strict supervision of quality. It is also subsequently necessary to ensure that any scientific discovery is authentic and trustworthy.

There are innumerable instances in the history of science to show the importance given to fidelity. The best example is that of Newton, who withheld the publication of his gravitational theory for almost 16 years, because his theoretical predictions did not agree with the available observational data. For these deductions, Newton had used a value for the distance of the Moon from the Earth, which was based on the observations available at that time. However, later observations refined this value. When Newton plugged that new value into his equation, he got almost perfect agreement between theory and observation. It is only then that Newton decided to publish his magnum opus, *Principia Mathematica Philosophiae Naturalis*. Such was his sense of Honesty.

3. Disinterestedness :-

This value of science demands that the results of scientific research should not be influenced by any ideology or manipulated to serve for personal profit. They should be honest, objective and impersonal. This is perhaps the greatest strength of science.

The best example in this context is the way the soviet regime distorted science during the Stalinist era. Many were the attempts made by it to show that most of the important scientific advances made by

the rest of the world, like Relativity and Quantum Mechanics had already been done by soviet scientists much earlier. The international scientific community did not accept this claim, because it lacked proof.

4. Organized Skepticism:-

This value demands that no scientific statement should be accepted based only on the word of authority. There must be intellectual freedom to question such statements. According to science, the test of validity of any statement is experimental or observational verification.

When Schrodinger introduced probabilistic concepts into quantum theory, Einstein was dismayed and made the famous remark “God does not play dice with the universe.” However later investigations showed that the younger scientist was right and the senior one was wrong.

If science today has become a force to reckon with and is influencing human life in all spheres, it is because of this strict adherence to the above four fold value system.

Religion and Its Values

Apart from science, there is one more potent force which has significantly influenced human life. Ever since the human being discovered that all earth-bound phenomena are transitory and ephemeral, he has been passionately seeking for something which is beyond time and space. Based on his experiences and realizations, the human being has developed many theoretical frameworks called philosophies and has tried to put them into practice by systems of religion.

There are several such schools of philosophy and religion in the world today, the most prominent being Sanatana Dharma (Hinduism), Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism and many others. These possess dogmas, beliefs and methodologies of their own. Over a long period of time, they have tended to become rigid and some have even fossilized. The great souls who have given birth to them have been remarkable intellects and geniuses. But their followers, unfortunately, have not been able to match the intellect or the brilliance of the Masters and have interpreted these religions according to their own limited capacities, like the blind men trying to explain an elephant by feeling its

parts. No wonder, their partial interpretations and explanations have given rise to the spectra of sectarianism, bigotry, persecution and the most recent phenomenon – religious chauvinism and fundamentalism. Unlike science, which has become a unifying force, religion has only served to divide humanity into several sects, who keep quarrelling with one another constantly. This is also another reason why there has been general withdrawal from organized religion and a great rise in materialism.

This situation has prompted many great souls to search for a universal religion, which can be a panacea for all evils. But the human experience has been that even such movements end up in finally being labeled as one more new religion or sect. What one needs today are not new religions or amalgamation of the existing religions, but we need to assess all existing religions, philosophies and dogmas to find out which of them comes closest to the value system, which has made science so universal and powerful.

As described above, the four important characteristics of Science, which makes it universally acceptable, are Universalism, Communalism, Disinterestedness and Organized Skepticism. If we apply these criteria to the existing religious practices, very few of them qualify to be called scientific. It is not that these religions are false or useless. It is quite well known that faith, blind or otherwise, plays a major role in the acceptance of a religion and its practice. However, the modern mind of a so called educated person, brought up in the traditions of science, attempts to stretch its skepticism to the utmost before accepting any religious practice as meaningful or worth the while. It thus becomes all the more imperative that we look for a religious practice which throws a challenge to the modern mind and addresses it to experiment with it.

The Challenge of Patanjali Yoga:-

Among several of the existing spiritual practices, there are two that display these characteristics of science. They are Advaita Vedanta or Non Dualism and Patanjali's Raja Yoga. The former is quite out of the reach of most of the people because of the lack of competence on the part of practitioners and, more importantly, because of the lack of opportunities. The latter, however is more easily accessible and is quite a rage today. Thus, We propose to examine how this Yoga satisfies the value criteria of Modern Science. Before

we do that, we should understand what Patanjali Yoga is all about.

Indian Philosophy has six branches (Shaddarshana). These are Nyaya (Logic), Vaisesika (Atomism), Sankhya (Wisdom of Duality), Yoga (Wisdom of Union), Mimamsa (Wisdom of Vedic Karmas) and Vednata (Wisdom of Vedic Knowledge). Each one of these philosophies is associated with a textbook, written in the form of Aphorisms (Sutras). The Book associated with Yoga is believed to have been composed by the sage called Patanjali and thus goes by the name Patanjala Yoga Sutras.

True to the tradition in Indian Scriptures, more is known about this book than the author himself. All that is known about Sage Patanjali is that he flourished sometime between the second century BCE (Before the Common Era, earlier known as BC= Before the birth of Christ) and the second century CE (Common Era, earlier known as AD= After the death of Christ) and compiled the existing knowledge about Yoga into a systematic branch of Philosophy. It is a highly practice-oriented subject, with its theoretical base provided by the Sankhya Philosophy.

The book itself, containing 196 aphorisms, is divided into four chapters or quarters (padas).

The first chapter, called the Samadhi Pada (Chapter on Self-Engrossment), introduces the concept of Samadhi, its multifarious forms, the concept of Omkara, the obstacles faced by a practitioner and the methods of overcoming them.

The second chapter is called as Sadhana Pada (Chapter on Practices), essentially dealing with the practical aspects of how to refine and control the Mind.

In the third chapter, called the Vibhuti Pada (Chapter on Powers), Patanjali discusses the changes that occur in the human mind on its way to Samadhi through concentration and meditation. It is this study of the mind which has led many scholars to call Patanjali Yoga Sutras, a text on Indian Psychology. This chapter also contains a list of super natural powers attained by Yogis through their practice, which are also obstacle to Samadhi.

The last chapter, known as Kaivalya Pada (Liberation Chapter), is about the last stages of the Practices, when the meditator

dissolves in the object of meditation and the trinity vanishes. Patanjali calls the last state as Kaivalya (Liberation) or Aloneness, without explaining what it is, because of the absence of Trinity it is experienced but cannot be explained.

At first sight, the book appears to be the collection of a set of disjointed aphorisms. But a more careful and detailed study reveals the connecting links. Like Buddha, Patanjali also feels, for several reasons, that human life is full of sorrow. He believes that the experience of sorrow is due to the superimposition of the consciousness, the Purusa (the Soul) on the inert material content, Prakriti (the Material cause). According to Patanjali, the separation of the two is Vidya (Right Perception) and when this happens, all sorrow disappears.

How can a Yogi bring about this separation? Patanjali says that the method to do this is the practice of the Eightfold Path (Ashtanga Yoga). This is the practical aspect of Yoga which has become very popular around the world, and is seen as the future culture of the world. The Eightfold path, as the very name suggests, consists of eight limbs – Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. Of these,

Yama and Niyama—————are Ethical Practices.
Asana and Pranayama—————are Physical Practices.
Pratyahara and Dharana—————are Mental Practices,
Dhyana and Samadhi—————are spramental states of existence.

The Eight Limbs of Yoga :-

1. Yama and Niyama

These constitute the very first steps one has to take in the long journey towards Self Realization. They are like Kindergarten classes, with which any secular education commences. In this sense, most of us are tiny toddlers in the field of spirituality.

Yama consists of of Ahimsa (Non-injury & Non-killing), Satya (Truthfulness), Asteya (Non-stealing & Non-covetousness), Brahmacharya (Celibacy = Continence or Self control) and Aparigraha (Non-possessiveness).

Niyama comprises of Shaucha (External & Internal Purity), Santosha (contentment), Tapas (Austerities), Svadhyaya (Study of Scriptures) and Isvarapranidhana (Surrender to the Divine). For our current discussion over here, the most important is the last, viz., surrender to the divine. Patanjali does not insist on faith in one particular form of God, as in sectarian religions. What is needed is the appreciation of the fact that there is a higher power which governs our lives and one should consciously or otherwise offer one's prayers to it.

2. Asana and Pranayama

These are physical practices enjoined by Patanjali to train one's body and mind, which are the media available to us for Self-Realization. Asana means a firm posture, in which one can sit for long periods of time in meditation etc, without feeling any bodily discomfort. The multifarious asanas now in use are all meant to make the body supple and healthy, so that one can practice yoga more effectively.

Pranayama is one of the most misunderstood step of Yoga. It has been equated with Breath control. But it is much more than that, It is the voluntary control of energy within the Physical and Subtle body.

3. Pratyahara and Dharana

These are mental exercises, which help in withdrawing the mind from the external world and in turning it inwards. As mentioned in the Kathopanishad, "It is only a rare soul who is bold enough to turn his gaze inwards to realize the self within." This process is two-fold. The first step is to shut out the external world. The mind, however, by nature, abhors vacuum. Hence, the external world so shut out must be replaced by something internal and this process needs a support, an internal object. The particular object on which the mind is now focused and fixed or concentrated is purely the business of the individual concerned. It is a matter between the individual and the Master, and has nothing to do with the religion, sect, gender, age, race, color, etc of the person concerned. Thus, Raja Yoga of Patanjali, in this sense, is all-encompassing and gives total freedom to an individual.

4. Dhyana and Samadhi

The last two stages are Dhyana (Meditation) and Samadhi (Engrossment). The Meditation is the unbroken or uninterrupted flow of thought on the internal object of contemplation; While Samadhi is the ultimate state of oneness with the Absolute. These are concepts which cannot be described in words, but only experienced.

How scientific is this Yoga?

Discoveries in science follow a particular methodology called scientific method. This commences with the observation of natural phenomena, followed by a process of reasoning to find out why things behave the way they do. Based on such logical reasoning, a possible hypothesis is developed. This is only a tentative guesswork and needs to be validated. The hypothesis is then used to deduce results, which can explain phenomena that have either not been seen at all or even if seen not understood. The final validity is, of course through controlled experiments. According to Feynman, the test of all knowledge is experiment.

Let us consider the Ashtanga Yoga in the light of the above. The origins of this Yoga are lost in the hoary antiquity of the past. We do not know when these discoveries were made and what the stages of the growth were till the findings were codified in the Yoga Sutras. All that we are left with is a set of instructions which need to be followed scrupulously to achieve end results. We also have records of statements of many great souls who have trodden this path and certified the validity of these instructions. In this sense, Patanjali's Yoga is an experimental science. The laboratory, in which this science can be experimented, is our own body and mind. Like any other treatise on physical sciences, the Yoga Sutras also challenge us to perform these experiments and check if the conclusions are correct. The study of any physical science requires the help of a competent teacher. Similarly, Yoga needs the help of a realized soul, so that the novice does not make any mistakes. These mistakes can prove costlier than those made in a science laboratory, since they may affect the psyche of the subject himself. Hence the greater need for guidance.

We will now examine how yoga satisfies the criteria for being

considered scientific. We saw above that there are four criteria against which science is weighed – Universalism, Communalism, Disinterestedness and Organized Skepticism. It needs now to be demonstrated that yoga also displays these characteristics.

- 1) As discussed earlier, the first value, Universalism implies being independent of race, color, caste or creed. Ashtanga yoga is a practice from which none is barred. Even though there have been some misconceptions that yoga is a purely Hindu practice to be practiced by Sadhus (Mendicants or Monks) only. It is now generally recognized that it is a common heritage of the Human race. It is in the second half of the last century, when yoga practitioners started traveling west, that this realization has dawned in the western world. The impact of which is seen now in the eastern world also. Therefore, today, there are millions of practitioners of yoga all over the world, who have realized and have adopted it irrespective of their personal caste, creed, color, gender, religion, race, etc. There are yoga schools even in the Middle East and some Islamic countries like Turkey, etc. proving the Universality of Yoga.
- 2) The second value, Communalism, requires free access of knowledge in the public domain. This is obviously true of all ancient scriptures, whose wisdom is the common property of humanity. The intention of the ancient sages of India in compiling knowledge existing at that time in the the form of scriptures was not to gain wealth or fame, nor to mislead the public. Their only interest was the welfare of human beings. However, later, there have been instances, especially in the United States, of people trying to take patents on Yogasanas. The motive is obvious. But, all such attempts have come to naught, thanks to the vigilant public. Yoga is a public property, but still comes with a proviso; it is always safer to learn it through a teacher, just like any other science.
- 3) Disinterestedness, the third value, implies that for profit or personal ends knowledge should not be manipulated. This does not mean that one cannot take to yoga as a career. In today's environment where the individual has to take care of himself or

herself, earning in an honest way one's own livelihood has the approval of society to adopt yoga as a career. But, what is meant here is that yoga should not be misused to promote any ideology or for religious conversion, as was the case with science during the time of Hitler and Stalin. This can happen, only when yoga becomes religious or a political weapon. The chances of something like that happening are very remote, and we hope that they remain remote.

- 4) The last value is Organized Skepticism, which simply means 'Do not take anything for granted just because somebody says so.' This was a dictum of which Adi Shankaracharya was fond of and always encouraged his disciples to follow it. Patanjali, along with the sages of the Upanishads, is also of the same opinion. He gives a set of instructions to be followed by sincere aspirants in his aphorisms, without going into too many details. This is the reason why his aphorisms are terse and can be properly understood only after much practice. The best commentators on these sutras are those who have actually verified it through long practice. Thus there is no place here for dogma or blind belief.

In spite of all these logical assertions, there is still a resistance on the part of the international community to accept Raja Yoga or Vedanta as scientific. This is true especially of the practitioners of conventional scientific disciplines. The only way one can probably convince these skeptics is to present these esoteric sciences in the language of material sciences, like physics, chemistry and biology. We have cited Feynman earlier who said that the test of theory is experiment. This is the methodology followed in science, namely experimental investigations under controlled conditions with the use of the latest technique of data analysis. Is it possible to adopt the same method to demonstrate that Raja Yoga too is scientific? Yes, In nineteen eighties Dr. Hiroshima motoyama, a Japanese Psychiatrist, experimented many Yogis on specially designed MRI machines and proved Yoga is scientific. Read his book 'A Bridge to Higher Consciousness.'

One major reason, why a large number of people around the world

are going in for yoga today is its emergence as an alternate system of health care. This role has been recently recognized, so much so that the Government of India has a department of Alternate Medicine called AYUSH, dealing with Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy as systems of therapy. This has been made possible by a good number of medical doctors recognizing the value of yoga therapy as an adjunct to their allopathic practice. This is true not only in India, but of the west also, where more and more people are being attracted to this non-invasive technique of treatment.

In view of these developments, a time has come when scientific investigations need to be undertaken to quantify the benefits of yoga. The Yoga research centre at BSY, Monger, Bihar; Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Sansthana, Bangalore; and many other institutions are engaged in this task for the last three decades. As a result, more and more intellectuals and thinkers have started recognizing the rational and scientific nature of Yoga. This effort needs to be strengthened and replicated around the Globe, for the benefit of humanity.

Concluding Remarks

When we compare the scientific method adopted by scientists with the instructions laid down by Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras, we are stuck by the remarkable character of the latter. The Sutras do not ask us to subscribe to any particular religion or Godhead to the exclusion of others. They do not ask us to take their words for granted on faith or authority only, but they challenge us to conduct the experiments upon ourselves. They do not prescribe any conditions about age, gender, caste, creed, color, etc. They are Universal and international in character. It is the Universality and the non-dogmatic character of yoga which has attracted attention wherever it has been propagated. If there is any one spiritual discipline which can be considered to satisfy all accepted values of the scientific system, it is Patanjali's Yoga Sutras. It is no surprise that it has been received enthusiastically and practiced all over the world.

Thus we can say that Yoga is the contribution of Indian culture to the international community.

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MANAGE YOUR STRESS BEFORE IT MANGLES YOU

Science and technological progress in the world over seems to have changed our lifestyle and value system, and *has made man go in for more and more money, to have more and more comforts with less and less work*. The progress has given a lot of stress too, as the man has become highly sensitive, creative and critical. Sharp to the core, his intellect has attained tremendous power of analysis. The left side of the brain is highly developed. He has unraveled subtle mysteries of Nature and understood the general laws of nature. But at the same time is exploiting the nature so much we are facing Global warming, Pollution, etc.

Thus associated with this growth is the emergence of two great challenges- ‘**Pollution**’ and ‘**Stress**’. The challenge of Pollution is being tackled with certain degree of success but even after the best efforts and expensive researches all over the Globe, the solution to ‘**Stress**’ is yet no where in sight. Because of lower standards of life with increasing health hazards, social unrest, communal disharmony, and so on are different expressions of stress. The current world-view, the matter-based approach, science and technology and *the associated life styles will have to undergo change towards a more holistic world-view along with healthier, holistic and harmonious living*. Emotions training and harnessing of the ‘will power’ along with growth of the right side of the brain (intuition i.e. intuition from within) are a must for holistic, healthier and harmonious living; that’s where Yoga comes in.

Yoga far from being mere physical or breathing or acrobatic or demonstration of some magical or supernatural powers, is *universal in nature, a science and culture of the future with a holistic vision relevant to a progressive society*. Yoga is a conscious process of accelerating growth from an animal man, to a great man, to a super man, to a wise man, to a divine man and finally to the divinity itself by gradually manifesting immense potentialities dormant in man.

Yoga not only works to bring fitness and vigor to the physical body, but also harnesses our will and emotions and expands our power of analysis, insight and visions. Therefore Yoga is such a science which harnesses the will, calms the mind, sharpens the intellect and steadies the emotions, which are the key to actual human progress.

Apart from periodically and regularly releasing accumulated stress and tensions which is essential to begin with, it is imperative to move towards a stress free life retaining most powers and capabilities obtained by the sensitive mind and sharp intellect, essential for day to day functioning in this high tech era. Only then the challenge of stress can be totally met. The secret of 'Karma Yoga' offers us precisely this art. Using this we learn the art of 'working-in-relaxation' with total 'awareness in action'. The path of work teaches us to interact in the society judiciously and effectively without losing our innate bliss and peace.

For managing stress yoga is the best holistic way, as it is based on complete understanding of the concept of stress. It is not enough if we work at the physical level i.e. physical body alone to reduce stress but it is mandatory to bring balance at all levels – Prana, Mind and Intellect i.e. subtle body. By using this technique of total approach of yoga we can learn to expand our horizons, increase our capacities and capabilities of working and thinking as well as manifest our dormant 'Potentialities' as stated by Swami Vivekananda – "Each Soul is potentially divine and the goal is to manifest this divinity within, by means internal and external; by work, by worship, by psychic control, or by philosophy – by one of these or by two of these or by a few of these or by all of these and be free."

Shrimad Bhagavad Gita also proclaims "Such persons enjoy serene peace and bliss from deep within attuned to the illumination of total knowledge within and actively engage themselves for the good of all beings, enjoying the very process of serving others." There are three cardinal principles of Yoga – relaxation of the body muscles, slowing down the breath and calming the mind. Then how can there be a trace of stress?

Crystallizing these principles and techniques which yoga offers effective programs for the management of stress have been developed.

The program consists of Yogasanas like Shavasana etc, Pranayama like Bhramari and Ujjayi, Nada Yoga (Sound resonance), Meditation and notional corrections intellectually. After a month's practice the time taken in doing these practices would be reduced to just about half an hour, best done both in the morning and evening, before going to work-place and after returning from work-place, giving you better clarity and efficiency at work and providing good health & happiness at home.

Therefore, Yoga along with physical, mental and emotional personality development and holistic understanding offers a total approach to the challenge of stress. It gives us holistic life style of bliss, efficiency, emotional equipoise, mental clarity, intellectual sharpness and physical well being.

So, Yoga is a panacea for everything; it provides you complete overview and elevates you to a super conscious state and makes you a universal man, for, Yoga is 'Resting in one's own true nature.'

Signs and symptoms of stress

These can be classified into the following categories –

Physical signs, Emotional signs, mental signs, Behavioral signs, like Tension-headache, Irritable bowel syndrome, disturbed sleep, muscle tension, short temper, anger, indecisiveness, loss of concentration, loss of confidence, depression, loss of memory, anxiety, neurosis, hyper-tension, diabetes, asthma, cancer, cervical spondylitis, negative thinking, lack of enthusiasm, unable to relax, unable to recover, etc.

Watch for stress warning signs?

When a person exhibits stress warning signs, he probably requires attention. Here are a few stress warning signs as reported in the IMA management review.

Difficulty in making decisions.

Making safe choices, taking no risks.

Anger, hostility and/or outbursts of temper.

Hypochondria.

Missing appointments or deadlines.

Vague, disconnected speech and/or writing patterns.

Sudden increase in accidents.

Sudden increase in making careless errors.

Difficulty in communicating and getting down with others.

Excessive or (Irrational) mistrust of colleagues and co-workers.

Constant harping on failures obsessive rumination.

Sudden reversal of a usual behavior; aloneness with a normally friendly person; a careful worker becomes careless; shy worker becomes gregarious and vice-versa; tendency of a team player to want to go it alone; a casual worker becomes obsessively compulsive; etc.

What is the Remedy?

**Please attend SMART – Stress Management Anxiety
Reducing Techniques**

Workshop developed for stress management.

Understand stress and attain deep relaxation.

Release innate stress hitherto unknown and most harmful.

Attain greater clarity in thinking and decision making.

Improve inter-personal relations and thus increase productivity.

Gain better control over anger and undesirable desires.

Develop higher brain and the right brain through increased awareness.

Delve into deeper layers of consciousness for greater efficiency, power and confidence for over all improved performance.

FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions)

(Related to Control of Subconscious Mind)

Question: It is said that the subconscious mind (SM) is very powerful and constitutes 90 % of the mind. Is this true?

Answer: Yes, According to modern psychology also only 10 % of our mind is conscious, while 90 % is subconscious.

Question: What is the significance of this?

Answer: It means that many of the activities which we do in our day-to-day life are governed and prompted by our subconscious mind.

Question: For example?

Answer: Suppose you are listening to a lecture with apt attention. You might also be moving your hands and fingers, even without your being conscious of it. These movements are due to the promptings of the subconscious mind (SM).

Question: Does subconscious mind act only on the physical body?

Answer: No, SM also influences our thoughts and even our decision making. Western psychologists too say that the SM urges and desires manipulate the conscious mind to get fulfilled.

Question: What does Indian Psychology say?

Answer: According to Indian Psychology, we are prompted by our past impressions called sanskaras and vasanas to act in a specific manner, which are embedded in the SM and they are very strong.

Question: Some say that SM is fully active during sleep?

Answer: No, during sleep we are with the unconscious mind. But the SM is active during the dream state. During that state the conscious mind sleeps; it is shut off. So the SM gets an opportunity to have an unhindered full play.

Question: But in the dreams we also see the pictures seen in the waking state. So how can you say that only the SM is active?

Answer: Most of the dreams are symbolic. For example snake is a symbol of lust, although the seer may not feel lustful in the waking state. If he/she sees a snake in the dream, it means that he/she has lust suppressed in the SM.

Question: Can we control the SM or a proper use of it?

Answer: Certainly yes. And this is a real task for us. According to one technique, the mentally retarded children are made to listen to music or some text, selected by experts, while they are asleep. The SM listens and so learns them. Later that child is able to reproduce much of what is

learnt by the SM without the effort of the conscious mind. As a matter of fact, most of the activities of small children are governed by the SM, and their learning too is through the SM.

Question: How to make use of this technique for adults also?

Answer: The atmosphere we live in, the people we meet, the pictures we see, the sound we hear, the things we touch or taste or smell; knowingly or unknowingly, all these inputs influence the SM. As a matter of fact, we are always learning many things unconsciously too. Thus use the above said technique with a change in the objects of perception and auto-suggestion.

Question: Please illustrate this?

Answer: For example, when you are working or are sitting in a room or are traveling in a car, continuously play a CD/DVD of divine songs or sacred chanting. Although your conscious mind is busy with the task at hand, still, the holy music will effortlessly enter into your ears, and influence your SM. Also put holy pictures in various places in your house, as you move around, although you may not look at it, still, their presence will be felt by the SM, and it will be affected.

Question: How can one control the conscious mind?

Answer: By the practice of Pranayama, Pratyahara and Dharana.

Question: And how can one control the SM?

Answer: By Meditation (Dhyana), this is one of the eight steps in Patanjali's system of Yoga. But, unless the principles of the first two steps, i.e. Yama and Niyama, which are meant to contract both the Conscious mind and the SM, are not regularly practiced no one can succeed in the control of the conscious mind which gradually leads to the control of the SM. Yama includes the universal ethical values; Non-violence, truth, chastity, non-stealing and non-possessiveness. Niyama includes purity of body & mind, contentment, study of holy healthy literature, austerity and surrender to divine.

Question: But as these are practiced consciously, how do they help in controlling the SM?

Answer: When one systematically practices the conscious control of mind, with intensity and for long time, it produces Impressions of control called as Nirodha Sanskaras. Nirodha means control or restraint and Sanskaras essentially are impressions in the SM. Thus the SM is controlled.

Question: Any Example?

Answer: When Shri Ramakrishna practiced renunciation of money, he forcefully impressed upon his mind that money is as useless as dust, since it cannot impart Self-Realization. Thinking thus he threw away a coin and a lump of clay in River Ganga. His practice of auto-suggestion was so intense and the impression produced on the SM was so deep that later he could not touch any metal, even unconsciously. Even if he touched unknowingly metal or coin he felt a burning sensation.

Question: It is said that we, on an average use only 10% of our brain, is it true?

Answer: We do not know the exact percentage; but, certainly we use only a part of our brain, the rest remains unused.

Question: How can we use greater parts of our brain and thus become more efficient?

Answer: Answer: Most of our psychic energies are wasted due to restlessness. Most of us, at most times remain dull or restless. If this psychic inertia can be removed and the restless mind controlled by leading a systematic life, much of the energy which is frittered away can be harnessed.

When the natural flow of a river is stopped by a dam and the water is channeled in a specific direction, and is made to fall on a turbine, it produces electricity. Similarly, the restless extrovert mind must be controlled by the practice of detachment (Vairagya) and its energy canalized, through effort (Meditation and Samadhi practices) and redirected by introverting towards its source, the divine cosmic consciousness. That is how we acquire extraordinary powers which are mentioned in the Yoga Sutras.

Thus concluding we suggest one and all to overcome the restless and lethargy of body and mind, stop wasting time and psychic energies in useless activities, and learn to lead a systematic Yogic life (See Gita 6.17) and attain Eternal Absolute bliss.

With Best Wishes

and

Blessings

from

Swami Shanti Dharmananda Saraswati.

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